Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

10 August 2018

English only

2018 Meeting
Geneva, 4-7 December 2018

Meeting of Experts on review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention
Geneva, 7-8 August 2018
Item 9 of the agenda
Adoption of the factual report reflecting the deliberations of the meeting, including possible outcomes

Draft Report of the 2018 Meeting of Experts on review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention

Submitted by the Chair

I. Introduction

1. At the Eighth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BWC/CONF.VIII/4), States Parties decided to hold annual meetings and that the first such meeting, in December 2017, would seek to make progress on issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process.

2. At the Meeting of States Parties in December 2017, States Parties reached consensus on the following:

> "(a) Reaffirming previous intersessional programmes from 2003-2015 and retaining the previous structures: annual Meetings of States Parties preceded by annual Meetings of Experts.
>
> (b) The purpose of the intersessional programme is to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on those issues identified for inclusion in the intersessional programme.
>
> (c) Recognising the need to balance an ambition to improve the intersessional programme within the constraints – both financial and human resources – facing States Parties, twelve days are allocated to the intersessional programme each year

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from 2018- 2020. The work in the intersessional period will be guided by the aim of strengthening the implementation of all articles of the Convention in order to better respond to current challenges. The Meetings of Experts for eight days will be held back to back and at least three months before the annual Meetings of States Parties of four days each. Maximum use would be made of the Sponsorship Programme funded by voluntary contributions in order to facilitate participation of developing States Parties in the meetings of the intersessional programme.

(d) The meetings of the MSP will be chaired by a representative of the EEG in 2018, a representative of the Western Group in 2019 and a representative of the Group of Non-Aligned Movement and Other States in 2020. The annual Chair will be supported by two annual vice-chairs, one from each of the other two regional groups. In addition to the reports of the Meetings of Experts, the Meetings of States Parties will consider the annual reports of the ISU and progress on universality. The Meetings of Experts will be chaired in 2018 by [the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties to the BWC] (MX 1 and MX 2) and the Western Group (MX 3 and MX4), in 2019 by EEG (MX1 and MX 2) and NAM (MX 3 and MX 4), and in 2020 by Western Group (MX 1 and MX 2) and by EEG (MX 3 and MX 4); MX 5 will be chaired by the regional group chairing the MSP.

	MSP	*MX 1*	*MX 2*	*MX 3*	*MX 4*	*MX 5*
2018	EEG	NAM	NAM	WG	WG	EEG
2019	WG	EEG	EEG	NAM	NAM	WG
2020	NAM	WG	WG	EEG	EEG	NAM

All meetings will be subject mutatis mutandis to the rules of procedure of the Eighth Review Conference.

(e) The Meetings of Experts would be open-ended and will consider the following topics:

[…]

MX2 (2 days): Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention:

- Review of science and technology developments relevant to the Convention, including for the enhanced implementation of all articles of the Convention as well as the identification of potential benefits and risks of new science and technology developments relevant to the Convention, with a particular attention to positive implications;
- Biological risk assessment and management;
- Development of a voluntary model code of conduct for biological scientists and all relevant personnel, and biosecurity education, by drawing on the work already done on this issue in the context of the Convention, adaptable to national requirements;
- In 2018, the MX2 will address the specific topic of genome editing, taking into consideration, as appropriate, the issues identified above;
- Any other science and technology developments of relevance to the Convention and also to the activities of relevant multilateral organizations such as the WHO, OIE, FAO, IPPC and OPCW.

[...]

(f) Each Meeting of Experts will prepare for the consideration of the annual Meeting of States Parties a factual report reflecting its deliberations, including possible outcomes. All meetings, both of Experts and of States Parties will reach any conclusions or results by consensus. The Meeting of States Parties will be responsible for managing the intersessional programme, including taking necessary measures with respect to budgetary and financial matters by consensus with a view to ensuring the proper implementation of the intersessional programme. The Ninth Review Conference will consider the work and outcomes it receives from the Meetings of States Parties and the Meetings of Experts and decide by consensus on any inputs from the intersessional programme and on any further action."

3. By resolution 72/71, adopted without a vote on 4 December 2017, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, requested the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention and to continue to provide such services as may be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the review conferences.

II. Organization of the Meeting of Experts

4. In accordance with the decisions of the Eighth Review Conference and the 2017 Meeting of States Parties, the 2018 Meeting of Experts on Review of Developments in the Field of Science and Technology Related to the Convention was convened at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 9 to 10 August 2018, chaired by Mr. Pedro Luiz Dalcero, Minister-Counsellor of Brazil.

5. At its first meeting, on 9 August 2018, the Meeting of Experts adopted its agenda (BWC/MSP/2018/MX.2/1) as proposed by the Chair. The Chair also drew the attention of delegations to a background paper prepared by the Implementation Support Unit (BWC/MSP/2018/MX.2/2).

6. At the same meeting, following a suggestion by the Chair, the Meeting of Experts adopted as its rules of procedure, *mutatis mutandis*, the rules of procedure of the Eighth Review Conference, as contained in document BWC/CONF.VIII/2).

7. Mr. Daniel Feakes, Chief, Implementation Support Unit, Office for Disarmament Affairs, Geneva, served as Secretary of the Meeting of Experts. Mr. Hermann Lampalzer, Political Affairs Officer, Implementation Support Unit, served as Deputy Secretary and Ms. Ngoc Phuong van der Blij, Political Affairs Officer, also served in the secretariat.

III. Participation at the Meeting of Experts

8. 95 States Parties to the Convention participated in the Meeting of Experts as follows: Algeria; Angola; Argentina; Australia; Austria; Bahrain; Belarus; Belgium; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Brazil; Bulgaria; Canada; Chile; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Ecuador; El Salvador; Estonia; Finland; France; Georgia; Germany; Ghana; Greece; Guatemala; Holy See; Hungary; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Iraq; Ireland; Italy; Japan; Jordan; Kazakhstan; Kenya; Kuwait; Kyrgyzstan; Latvia; Lebanon; Lithuania; Madagascar; Malaysia; Mali; Malta; Mexico; Montenegro; Morocco; Myanmar; Nepal; Netherlands; Nicaragua; Niger; Nigeria; Norway; Pakistan; Panama; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Qatar; Republic of Korea; Romania; Russian Federation; San Marino; Saudi Arabia; Senegal; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; South Africa; Spain; Sri Lanka; Sudan; Sweden; Switzerland; the Former Yugoslav Republic of

Macedonia; Togo; Trinidad and Tobago; Turkey; Uganda; Ukraine; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America; Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of); Yemen; and Zimbabwe.

9. In addition, two States that had signed the Convention but had not yet ratified it participated in the Meeting of Experts without taking part in the making of decisions, as provided for in rule 44, paragraph 1 of the rules of procedure: Haiti and the United Republic of Tanzania.

10. One State, Israel, neither a party nor a signatory to the Convention, participated in the Meeting of Experts as an observer, in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 2.

11. The United Nations, including the United Nations 1540 Committee Group of Experts, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), attended the Meeting of Experts in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 3.

12. The Caribbean Community, the European Union, the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Science and Technology Center (ISTC), the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) were granted observer status to participate in the Meeting of Experts in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 4.

13. In addition, at the invitation of the Chair, in recognition of the special nature of the topics under consideration at this Meeting and without creating a precedent, two scientific, professional, commercial and academic organizations and experts participated in informal exchanges in the open sessions as guests of the Meeting of Experts: Professor Michael Imperiale, University of Michigan; and Professor Weiwen Zhang, Tianjin University.

14. 26 non-governmental organizations and research institutes attended the Meeting of Experts under rule 44, paragraph 5.

15. A list of all participants in the Meeting of Experts is contained in document BWC/MSP/2018/MX.2/INF.1.

IV. Work of the Meeting of Experts

16. In accordance with the provisional agenda (BWC/MSP/2018/MX.2/1) and an annotated programme of work prepared by the Chair, the Meeting of Experts had substantive discussions on the issues allocated by the 2017 Meeting of States Parties.

17. Under agenda item 4 ("Review of science and technology developments relevant to the Convention, including for the enhanced implementation of all articles of the Convention as well as the identification of potential benefits and risks of new science and technology developments relevant to the Convention, with a particular attention to positive implications"), the United States of America introduced working paper BWC/MSP/2018/MX.2/WP.5 and Professor Michael Imperiale of the University of Michigan, made a presentation, speaking as a "Guest of the Meeting". There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: India; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Romania; Saudi Arabia; Spain; Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America; Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) on behalf of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties to the BWC. Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

18. Under agenda item 5 ("Biological risk assessment and management"), an interactive discussion on the agenda item took place in which the following States Parties participated: India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Mali; Netherlands; Saudi Arabia; Spain; Sweden; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America; and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) on behalf of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties to the BWC. Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

19. Under agenda item 6 ("Development of a voluntary model code of conduct for biological scientists and all relevant personnel, and biosecurity education, by drawing on the work already done on this issue in the context of the Convention, adaptable to national requirements"), Germany introduced working paper BWC/MSP/2018/MX.2/WP.1 and China introduced a joint working paper with Pakistan, BWC/MSP/2018/MX.2/WP.9. France and Japan delivered technical presentations and Professor Weiwen Zhang, Tianjin University, made a presentation speaking as a "Guest of the Meeting". There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: Australia; China; Cuba; Germany; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Netherlands; Pakistan; Romania; Russian Federation; Spain; Switzerland; Ukraine; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America; and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) on behalf of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties to the BWC. There were also technical presentations from the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

20. Under agenda item 7 ("Genome editing, taking into consideration, as appropriate, the issues identified above"), [...]. There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: [...] Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

21. Under agenda item 8 ("Any other science and technology developments of relevance to the Convention and also to the activities of relevant multilateral organizations such as the WHO, OIE, FAO, IPPC and OPCW"), [...]. There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: [...] Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

22. In the course of its work, the Meeting of Experts was able to draw on a number of working papers submitted by States Parties and international organizations, as well as on statements and presentations made by States Parties, international organizations and guests of the Meeting, which were circulated in the Meeting.

23. The Chair, under his own responsibility and initiative, will prepare a paper listing considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions on the agenda items under discussion at the Meeting. The Meeting of Experts noted that this paper had not been agreed and had no status. It was the Chair's view that the paper could assist delegations in their preparations for the Meeting of States Parties in December 2018 and those in the remaining years of the intersessional programme and in succeeding Meetings of Experts on Review of Developments in the Field of Science and Technology Related to the Convention in the intersessional programme in 2019 and 2020 and also in their consideration of how best to "discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on" the topics in accordance with the consensus reached at the 2017 Meeting of States Parties. The paper prepared by the Chair, in consultation with States Parties, will be attached as annex I to the final version of this report.

V. Documentation

24. A list of official documents of the Meeting of Experts, including the working papers submitted by States Parties, is contained in annex II to this report. All documents on this list are available on the BWC website at http://www.unog.ch/bwc and through the United Nations Official Document System (ODS), at http://documents.un.org.

VI. Conclusion of the Meeting of Experts

25. At its closing meeting on 10 August 2018, the Meeting of Experts adopted its report by consensus, as contained in document BWC/MSP/2018/MX.2/CRP.1 as orally amended, to be issued as document BWC/MSP/2018/MX.2/3.